

Defoe's REVIEW

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A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

ENGLISH NATION.

Tuesday, September 24. 1706.

When the *French* are beaten, we shall have glorious Times—Said the first Oracle, that gave Birth to this Discourse, and 'tis not unlikely to be true; if we have but the Sense of Peace upon our Minds in *England*, and Wisdom to improve it equal to our Courage in obtaining it?

'Tis hard, a Nation, that has suffer'd so much by War, that has so often express'd our Sense of its fatal Length and expensive Management, should stand in need of any Caution; or be so much as suspected about their Prudentials, when they shall be trusted with Peace, when they shall have nothing to do, but enjoy the Fruit of 16 Years Toil, Blood and Expence. Who should know how to improve Peace, if not they who have so much known the Want of it? And yet I

must crave leave for a few Speculations on this Head, and they shall be brief enough.

First, *French* Power can hardly be reduc'd so low by War, but *English* Folly may raise it again——And to prove this, it would be a very good Method, tho' too long to go thro' in these Papers, to show how *English* Folly, viz. Divisions, have been the real Foot, on which the *French* Greatness has been rais'd.

The Folly and Divisions of the Empire gave them all *Alsace*, with the strong Cities of *Brissac*, *Friburg*, *Phillipsburgh*, &c. The Feuds of the *German* Princes embarrassing their Diets suffer'd them to build *Fort Kehl* at the Bridge of *Strasbourg*, *Fort Louis* in an Island on the *Rhine*, and to strengthen their Frontiers with invincible Fortifications.

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The Divisions and Follies of the *Swiss-Cantons* permitted them to build the terrible Fort of *Hunningben* within Canon-shot of the City of *Bisle*, as a Bridle in the Mouths of the Protestant *Cantons*, and a prevailing Argument to secure their Neutrality.

The Divisions and Impotence of *Spain* gave the *French Burgundy*, and the *French-Comte*; the Divisions of the Princes of *Italy* abandoning the old Duke of *Savoy*, gave them *Pignerol*, made so strong, that it was call'd by Cardinal *Riclieu* the Key of *France*—*Ditto* and *French Money* gave them *Casul* formerly, and *Mantua* now; of which they will not be easily dispos'd.

The dissatisfied *Spanish* Government gave them *Luxemburg*, that is, let them take it by Force; when the Prince of *Chimay*, who defended it bravely, wanted every thing necessary to preserve such a Capital Place.

Divisions in *Holland* let them into the Heart of their Country in 1672, in which they took a hundred Cities and strong Places, possess'd almost 5/6 of the 7 united Provinces, and bid fair for the whole.

But above all these, Divisions in *England* gave the fatal Blow to the Protestants in *France*, and so much contributed to their final Destruction. Had the Blood shed in *England* in the Civil Wars here, or a tenth Part of it been spent in timely Aids to the Protestants in *France*, when the brave Remains of that persecuted Generation defended *Rochel* to the last Extremity, *France* had been mat'd at home, his Tyranny had never been compleated, his Pride never been rais'd to such a Pitch, nor had he been able to have encroach'd upon his Neighbours in such a prodigious and unaccountable Manner, as he has done.

The Divisions here left them destitute, and strip'd them of the Strength, which they might have had till now with but a due Assistance from hence.

'Tis plain to any body, that has ever been acquainted with History, when *England* was entirely united, and mov'd by one regular Wheel of Government, I mean in *Queen Elizabeth's Time*, things were quite otherwise; how did our Strength influence the Affairs of *France*? The League was

crush'd, and its powerful Assistants disappointed, King *Henry* rais'd, and from a poor Condition set upon the Throne with such a Greatness, as is hardly to be express'd; and all by the Influence and Assistance of *England* united in Councils, and strengthen'd in Power.

England has more than once committed this Error to pull down *France* by her Power, and raise her again by her Folly—'Tis time to be wiser now, and I cannot but hope, we shall be too sensible of our own Weakness to run into these Excesses of Sloth and Negligence.

Let us come a little nearer; how have the Errors in *England* of the two reigning Brothers let the *French* into our Councils, into our Designs; into our very Parliaments, into our Cabinets; united *England* fix'd in her own Interest, and guided by her true Light, had never sold *Dunkirk*, nor demolish'd *Tangier*; had never sent the King of *France* Models to build Ships by, Workmen to finish them, or Materials for the Performance; we had never exchange'd Liberty for Whores, and *English* Strength for *French Money*.

The short use of all this is——— Let us be Fools no more, let us raise them no more, we have had Work enough to reduce them: What our Strength has pull'd down, let not our Weakness raise up. If Divisions have brought the *French* to this Height, which has cost us so much to undo, 'tis high time now to unite, put a stop to those Divisions, and no more to let our Enemies raise their Fortunes out of the Ruin of our Peace.

The Benefit of Union seems to me to need no farther Illustration, than a short sedate Reflection upon the Union of all the Creatures in their Subjection to Man. The Dominion Man had over the Creature was, as I have formerly observ'd, the first Gift God gave Man, after he had given him Life and a World to live in——By this Power over the Creature given with his Property in the Land; his Methods of living are form'd, and he is left at leisure to enjoy himself in this vast Garden of God, to employ his Time in Trade, or Diversion, Study, or Improvement; which had his

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Dominion over the Creatures been less, he must have diligently apply'd to provide himself Food.

To look unto this Case a little, tho' I touch'd it at it once before ; should God repeal this Law, take the Yoke off from the Creatures, leave them free, and proclaim War between them, and *their general Master* MAN. What a strange Alteration would it immediately make in the common Way of living in the World ? If the Horse would not draw, nor the Cattle drive, to go no farther than those two, the Consequences would be strange in the World.

First of all, it would unhinge all the Order of the poor and rich Master and Servant ; for the poor would be wholly taken up in hunting to kill Food for themselves, and their Families, and in planting Corn, &c. for their own Provisions.

The Estates of the great Men would not be worth one Farthing to them, any farther than by their own Labour, and meer Strength of Hand ; they and their Sons could cultivate and improve it, and the rest they would give up to any body, that would take it.

When they had cut Wood, or dug Holes for Fuel, they must bring it home on their Backs, when by their Gun or their Arrow they had kill'd any Beast for Food ; if it were 20 miles from home they must lug it thither, and then fetch Wood to boil or roast it, and then turn Cooks themselves, or their Wives to dress it.

The Consequence of this would be, they would presently abandon their fine Houses, and great Seats, and live in transitory Huts moveable and easie to be rear'd, that they might be where Food, Fuel, and Corn was at hand to supply them.

If they found a Cow, they might kill her, and take her Flesh ; but she would not be milk'd, unless by Force, they could so hamper her as to be out of Danger both of her Heels and her Horns.

Ploughing would be at an End, unless it could be done by Strength of Hand or Mathematical Motions, and Men would hardly have leisure for the Invention of the Spade ; if any body could be found to spare time to make it, must be the Plough, and

every Man be his own Team to work it.

The cultivated Fields would in a few Ages grow up into Woods, and the whole Land become like the Continent of *America*.

I am not carrying this War to an Extremity, and bring in the Elements at War with him, too ; for then he would dye, and the Creation revert to its original *Chaos*. The Man would be abandon'd by all the natural Helps to Life ; or suppose he could live, he must turn savage, and would in time be wilder than the Beasts. — The Helps of Arts and Sciences, and all Manner of Improvements would be in vain. When he had kill'd any Food, he must eat it raw like the Hound ; for the Fire would not burn to dress it, or its Heat would not have the Effect of boiling or roasting ; he must tear his Food to peices with his Teeth, or Claws, for the Iron would not cut ; or if it would, the Grindstone would not sharpen it, nor Tools work it ; Metals would not melt, Liquids would turn into Solids, and Solids into Fluids, and the World would be a Hell to the Wretch, call'd Man.

But to confine my Discourse only to a Rebellion of the few Creatures, which are now assistant to Man in his living, and which do his Labour for him, or supply his Want. — The Sheep and Ox not only find him Wool and Leather to cloth him, and Flesh to feed him ; but bring it home to his House, and offer themselves to the Knife, and the Ax for his Convenience ; they travel from one Country to another to be fattened, and from one Market to another to be sold ; the Cow will go to the Field to feed, and come orderly to her Hours to your Door to pay the Tribute of her Milk, to him that finds her Grass : The Horse carries you about from Place to Place, and enquires not whether it be for your Pleasure or your Profit, bears the Fury of your Passion, and objects not at your Folly for striking him often without Occasion, goes faster or slower, turns to the right or left, just as you command him, without disputing your Reason or your Authority.

How foolish would all our Gaiety and Grandeur look, if this Union of Obedience should but cease in these few Creatures ?

How

How full a Stop would it put to all Commerce, and how needless would our Charters be for Markets and Fairs?

I could illustrate this Observation by referring to any body, that has liv'd on the Continent of *America*, and seen the Lives of the native *Indians* there; who, before we came among them, liv'd just in this Manner—Without any Assistance from the Beasts of the Field, but what they obtain'd by Force.

They had neither Horse, Cow, nor Sheep among them; they had no Mettals for Tools, Weapons, or Vessels—Their Houses were moveable Huts, which they built; where, and as often as they wanted them, the wild Beasts were their Food, just as much of them as they could kill; Bow and Arrow was their Weapons; sharp Stones or Sticks their Knives; and Fire was the greatest Assistant they had.

'Twould be diverting to remark, how this Way of Life secur'd them from some Crimes, we are betray'd to by our Wealth; they coveted nothing, Money they had none, for it was of no Use to them; they had nothing to sell, nor wanted to buy; they could not cover Land, for all the World was their own, and they might build and plant any where, if they could but find Food; they knew not what Drunkenness meant, for Wine or strong Drink was entirely unknown to them; the Rivers were their Cellars, the Woods their Stables, Hunting their Exercise, the Flesh their Food, and the Skins their Cloathing: But of this by it's self.

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